

AN ADVICE Concerning The COMMUNICATION of TRADE.

IT is a Maxime universally received, that the Increase of Trade is indispensibly necessary towards the Happiness of a Nation; and it is no less certain, that nothing does so naturally tend to increase Commerce, as an universal Liberty: That all who have Genius or Stocks, may (without Disturbance) follow it.

The late Acts of this Nation for Communication of Trade (to which the Royal Burrows themselves lent the first Hand in their Convention 1692) do visibly tend to no other end, than that every Body capable might freely pursue Trade; And that the Fetters under which the Nation groan'd in that matter, by the many exclusive Privileges granted to the Royal Burrows, and the vexatious Pursuits which followed and depended upon them might be taken away, to the common Utility of the Nation, and yet without Damage to the Royal Burrows.

This excellent Design has not yet attained to it's Perfection, nor doth the generality of the Nation seem to advert to the Importance and Profit of it; And albeit the Parliament hath given Encouragement to it, and there was a Commission appointed to regulate that matter, who frequently met, and were ready to receive Proposals to forward it, yet few have taken notice of it, or concurred in it, which cannot but surprize any who is at pains to think about it.

But this Commission for Communication of Trade, having now as a Warning before their Power expire, and before the sitting of the Parliament, emitted a Proclamation of the 20th. March last, appointing the Commissioners of Supply of the several Shires and Stewarries of the Kingdom, to meet upon the last Thursday of April thereafter at their ordinary place of Meeting, and to hear what every Burgh of Regality, Barrony, and others unfree Traders within their respective Bounds will offer, and undertake to pay of the Burrows Tax-Roll for their Liberty of Trade, before they condescend upon the *Quota* to be payed by the

the unfree Traders; As also, to hear what the Burghs Royal shall object against the saids Offers, and to receive and consider what Arguments, Probation or Evidences may be adduced *hinc inde* for the better stating and adjusting the Quotas, and to set down in Writing their Opinion thereanent, and to report the same to the Commission of Parliament, betwixt and the first of June next to come, to the effect that the saids Commissioners may have a full view of the saids Offers, what they will amount to, and may the more advisedly accept or reject every particular Offer.

The Measure followed by the Commission is certainly very prudent and just, and if the Nation do not freely and Cordially enter into the Design, their Neglect will be attended with irreparable Prejudice, and the Opportunity will no sooner be lost than every body will be ready to blame us for the Omission; and it must be considered as a Folly that approaches to Stupidity or Madness.

It is therefore hoped, that it may not be unseasonable to Advise the Nobility and Gentry of the Nation, to meet punctually at the Day prefixt, and to make Offers freely for their Proportions of the Freedom of Trade; tho' the Offers were never so small.

It is very strange, that in a Case so plainly necessary, there should be any need for an Argument; yet, because of the Coldness shoven in this Matter, the persons concerned, are beseeched, for the Love to their Countrey, and their own particular Interests, to consider,

First, That it's undeniable the Communication of Trade is the Interest of the Nation, whereby both the Barons and Burrows have an evident Advantage, and this Communication is impracticable, unless the Unfree Traders of the Nation do make offer to bear a Proportion of the Burden laid upon the Royal Burrows; for it's against Reason, and against the Constitution of the Nation, that the Burrows, who bear a Proportion of the Publick Burdens (with special regard to their exclusive Priviledges of Trade,) should bear the same Burden, when that Trade is Communicate to all the rest of the Kingdom.

That this Communication is an universal Profit, will easily appear from what follows, The Unfree Traders by this Communication are freed from the many Laws, whereby all persons were discharged using of Merchandize, under severe Penalties, such as Escheat of Movables, &c. and for which they were subject to expensive and constant Processes and many times for a very inconsiderable Transgression, and sometimes without any cause at all, were Harassed and Exhausted with Attendance and Persecutions, which were unsupportably grievous, so that in that State, they were not only deprived of the Freedom of Trade, but the very suspicion of that design to follow or promote it, was a Handle to oppress them, and render their other Enjoyments bitter.

At the same time, tho' the Royal Burrows seemed eager in the Pursuit of these Priviledges and Advantages over the rest of the Nation, yet it did so crush the endeavours after Trade, and the generality of the Burrows were so unfit to carry it on, that Trade decayed in their Hands, and it may be justly reckoned as one of the great Causes of our Misfortunes, whereas if the Trade prove universal, the Burrows themselves will not only share in the common Advantage, but will have a special Benefit beyond the rest of the Nation, by the Fore-start they have already in Trade, their Situation and Constitution, with the Priviledge of their several Incorporations and Companies; and it was for this reason that the Convention of Burrows at Dundee in anno 1692, did first form the Project of Communitation, which was ratified in the Parliament 1693, but hath been since followed

lowed with too little Encouragement, and which in all probability, must now fall, to the great Scandal and Prejudice of the Nation, unless the Unfree Traders do (in compliance with the Proclamation of the Commission) make offers for the Priviledge of Trade within their respective Bounds.

2. And as its necessary to make these Offers, So its easie to regulate them ; For its first certain, that every man has an Interest to have it in his power to Trade, and whether he actually hath any Trade, within his Bounds, or even suppose he hath no present prospect of Trade, yet the Priviledge is worth the purchasing at a small rate : And therefore such as are in these Circumstances, may at least make offer of the fourth part of a Penny Scots, That isto say Twenty Shilling for eight Moneths Cels yearly, or two Shilling six pennies for every Moneths Cels yearly, and whether this Burden be to be valued considering the Ease, Accommodation, and benefite that may arise from the freedom of Trade, let any sober man judge with himself.

Others who either enjoy a greater share of the Trade already or have prospect of enjoying it, will certainly not be so perniciously Foolish as to omit the occasion of making offers suteable to their Circumstances, for preserving and confirming those Advantages ; In one Word, no reasonable man ought to omit the making Offers ; For its an Advantage even to those that have no Trade, that they may have it, and its an infinite Loss to these that have it or who have an immediat prospect to it, to be deprived of it : And its no small Encouragement to Offer, That no Offerer (how small so ever) will or can be refused, if it be proportioned to the Trade of the Offerer.

3. It is likewise to be remembred, That this Extraordinary Commission expires so soon as the Parliament meets, and if the Unfree-Traders omit now to do their Business by free Offers, one of two will happen, either the Design will intirely fail, and whether that will be more shamefull or prejudicial to the Kingdom in general, is hard to say, Or otherwise the Commission must fall upon other Methods to make this Communication of Trade effectual, which may probably be less easy.

It is known what Grudging has been on account of the Measures fallen upon for raising the Proportions due for Relief of the Burrows in the former years, by the Unfree-Traders, which yet was absolutely necessary, and what ever small Hardships occurs in the Application, The Method and Rule was Fair and Just ; And if any man complains that he or his Tennents are burdened, tho' they have no Trade, let him and them set about to Trade and answer his own Argument, Then it will easily be perceived that these Duties are not imposed for nothing ; But on the contrare the Advantage and Profit by the Freedom of Trade will appear exceeding great, and the Burden very easie : But to return to the present Case, if the Unfree-Traders think these Methods unequal and hard why do they not now offer fairly what they think is just to ask of them ; For it is certain, and they must acknowledge it, That this Freedom is worth the Purchasing